

that are inciting sectarian violence, and get the capital under control. The last of these reinforcements arrived in Iraq earlier this month, and the full surge has begun. One of our top commanders in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, put it this way: "We are beyond a surge of forces. We're now into a surge of operations."

Recently, we launched Operation Phantom Thunder, which has taken the fight to the enemy in Baghdad as well as the surrounding regions. We're still at the beginning of this offensive, but we're seeing some hopeful signs. We're engaging the enemy and killing or capturing hundreds. Just this week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior Al Qaida leaders north of Baghdad. Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are significantly down from what they were in January. We're also finding arms caches at more than three times the rate of a year ago. The enemy continues to carry out sensational attacks, but the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been down in May and June. And because of our new strategy, U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, with the result that many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.

The fight in Iraq has been tough, and it will remain difficult. We've lost good men and women in this fight. One of those lost was a marine lance corporal named Luke Yepsen. In the spring of 2005, Luke withdrew from his classes at Texas A&M to join the United States Marines. And in October 2006, he deployed to Iraq, where he manned a 50-caliber machine gun on a Humvee. Six months ago, Luke was killed by a sniper while on patrol in Anbar Province. Luke's father describes his son's sacrifice this way: "Luke died bringing freedom to an oppressed people. My urgent request is, finish the mission. Bring freedom to the Iraqi people."

On this Fourth of July, we remember Luke Yepsen and all the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in this struggle. They've helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people. They've helped make Americans more secure. We will not forget their

sacrifice. We remember their loved ones in our prayers. And we give thanks for all those from every generation who have defended our Nation and our freedoms.

Laura and I wish you a safe and happy Fourth of July. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on June 29 in Kennebunkport, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Modifications to the Visa Waiver Program

June 30, 2007

Last November, I announced my intention to seek modifications to our Visa Waiver Program that would offer our closest partners in Central and Eastern Europe as well as others, such as the Republic of Korea, an accelerated process for admission to the program as we strengthen the program's security components. I am committed to continuing to work with Congress to produce legislation that would strengthen our country's security by implementing this initiative. It is in our Nation's interest to facilitate travel to the United States and, at the same time, to prevent terrorists from being able to exploit that travel.

Statement on the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement

June 30, 2007

I am pleased that United States Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab and Republic of Korea Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong today signed the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement. This agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and service suppliers, promote economic growth and the creation of better paying jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them greater choices. The agreement will also further enhance the

strong United States-Korea partnership, which has served as a force for stability and prosperity in Asia. I call on Congress to ratify this landmark agreement, to the considerable benefit of the American people.

Exchange With Reporters in Kennebunkport, Maine

July 1, 2007

President Bush. Welcome. Is everybody having a nice day here?

Q. Yes. The lobsters are good.

President Bush. They are good.

Visit of President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Q. Sir, are you going to take him fishing?

President Bush. We might just do that, yes. Not sure yet, Mark.

Q. Today?

President Bush. Maybe today. It's pretty casual up here, as you know, unstructured.

Q. —the menu?

The First Lady. Lobster, what else? [Laughter]

[At this point, the exchange continued, and no transcript was provided. It resumed as follows.]

Visit to Kennebunkport, Maine

Q. How was the fishing today, sir?

President Bush. Lousy. [Laughter] Was that you, Chuck, the other day? No wonder we didn't catch any fish. They took a look at you and—[laughter]—headed out.

Terrorist Attacks in the United Kingdom

Q. Sir, while you're waiting, can you tell us what you think of those terrorist incidents in Britain and Scotland?

President Bush. We got a press conference tomorrow, Mark. But it just goes to show the war against these extremists goes on. You never know where they may try to strike. And appreciate the very strong response that the Gordon Brown Government has given to the attempts by these people.

[The exchange continued, and no transcript was provided. It resumed as follows.]

President Bush. Everybody been behaving themselves?

President's Vacation/Major League Baseball

Q. You sure you won't come back here a little more often? [Laughter]

President Bush. That's what I figured. [Laughter]

Q. I wasn't going to give you the satisfaction—[laughter].

President Bush. That's what I thought, yes. Well, the guy is counting the days in Crawford, you know. [Laughter]

Q. I'm counting your days here too—35.

Q. Are you watching any baseball?

President Bush. I watched the Ranger-Red Sox game today.

Q. Is it over? Did they win today too?

Q. I think they won today too.

Q. But the Yankees lost.

President Bush. They did?

[The exchange continued, and no transcript was provided. It resumed as follows.]

[President Putin arrived.]

President George H.W. Bush. Where did these guys all come from? When I left there was nobody here.

President Bush. Come over, Condi. Come on, Bill.

Okay? It's been real. [Laughter] Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at Walker's Point. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters in Kennebunkport

July 2, 2007

President Bush. I wanted to congratulate the President for being the only person that caught a fish. It was a fine catch. Secondly, I welcome you to my family home.

And we had a good, casual discussion on a variety of issues. You know, through the course of our relationship there have been